COUNCIL CHAMBER

Regular Meeting

January 26, 2016

The third meeting of the City Council of Charleston was held this date convening at 5:00 p.m. at the City Hall.

A notice of this meeting and an agenda were mailed to the news media January 20, 2016 and appeared in <u>The Post and Courier</u> January 24, 2016 and are made available on the City's website.

PRESENT (13)

The Honorable John J. Tecklenburg, Mayor

Councilmember White	District 1	Councilmember Waring	District 7
Councilmember Williams	District 2	Councilmember Seekings	District 8
Councilmember Lewis	District 3	Councilmember Shahid	District 9
Councilmember Mitchell	District 4	Councilmember Riegel	District 10
Councilmember Wagner	District 5	Councilmember Moody	District 11
Councilmember Gregorie	District 6	Councilmember Wilson	District 12

Mayor Tecklenburg called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

The Clerk called the roll.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I will now call on Councilmember Shahid to give us the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance."

Councilmember Shahid said, "Mr. Mayor, members of Council, Madam Clerk, it's with great pleasure that I introduce to you Rabbi Adam Rosenbaum, Rabbi of Synagogue Emanu-El in my district to give us the invocation this evening. Thank you."

Rabbi Rosenbaum opened the meeting with an invocation.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much."

Councilmember Shahid then led City Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We have one Proclamation this evening to make. It's not a presentation to anyone. So, I will just let you all know that we proclaim February 6th, upcoming, as Charleston STEM Festival Day. STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. There will be a festival at Brittlebank Park on Saturday, February 6th, and that day will be STEM Festival Day. We urge folks to know about this and, particularly, bring your kids and students to the Festival. There will be lots of learning opportunities along the line of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Next, we're going to have a number of public hearings this evening, and I do ask that if you come forward to speak on any matter, that you do try to confine your comments to the public hearing matter at hand. The first public hearing will be to amend our Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the Rethink Folly Road Plan, which City Council passed recently. Mr. (Christopher) Morgan."

Mr. Morgan said, "Mr. Mayor, members of Council, you all had a presentation on this Plan back in December. This is simply because of the amount of notice requirements there are for an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, and we'd like to take plans like this, the Folly Road Plan, and put them in our Comprehensive Plan. We needed to have another public hearing for this one to meet the notice requirements on the Comprehensive Plan, but it's the same document that you saw back in December. The presentation is there, and you have a copy in front of you. We would be happy to answer any questions you might have about it."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Moody.

Councilmember Moody said, "Christopher (Mr. Morgan), let me just ask you a quick question. I have been to some of these meetings, and I guess this whole thing stops at the Wappoo Cut and goes out. I'm not sure exactly whether it goes all the way to Folly Beach or not."

Mr. Morgan said, "It does. It goes to Center Street on Folly Beach. Yes, sir."

Councilmember Moody said, "So, I'm not sure why we're not including the part of the City on Folly Road that runs from Wappoo Cut, maybe into the City. That's kind of a stark area. There's a lot of concrete in the middle. It is not particularly nice-looking, and it's not particularly safe. It doesn't have bike routes. It doesn't have anything like that in that area. It seems to me like that would be an appropriate extension to put that piece in there and look at that as we rethink Folly Road. Let's rethink the whole road."

Mr. Morgan said, "If I could explain, there are several reasons why that area wasn't included. One of those is, this money to undertake this plan came from the South Carolina Department of Transportation. It was a request of the City and the other jurisdictions in that area that it cover this portion from the Wappoo Cut Bridge to Center Street on Folly Beach. So, we had been awarded the money based on that defined area. So, to add more to it could have created other complications because it wasn't part of the project study area. I would say, additionally, we have learned we have a lot of principles that come from this Plan that we could bring forward to that stretch of Folly Road, which is a little bit different as far as the uses that are along it, as opposed to the other portions of Folly Road. In other words, that's a portion of Folly that's almost exclusively Residential, which makes it a little bit easier to implement some of the things that are included for the more Commercial portions of Folly Road further down. I think as we continue in our planning, development activities, and activities that enhance our roadways, we can certainly take some of these principles and expand those up into that area, as well."

Councilmember Moody said, "I accept those comments. The only thing that I would say is that it smells a lot like I-526. 'Let's start over in Isle of Palms, and let's go all the way over to James Island and Johns Island and West Ashley', but we stopped somewhere and we never finished it. So, I'm just saying we have a piece of the City there that just happens to be in my district that I'd like to be included. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Seekings said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I agree 100 percent with Councilmember Moody. I think that once you get to that Wappoo Cut and go across that bridge there's all sort of challenges and opportunities. If we're going to include Rethink Folly Road in our Century V Plan, it's a good start, but we can't forget about that portion of it. In some ways, that is the smallest, most achievable part right there to do some things quickly, like enhancing sidewalks, making it safer. So, I endorse Councilmember Moody's thought that as we adopt this, we keep thinking about it, and we add that section in because there's a lot of work we can do and, I think, quickly. So, I think we should put it in the Century V Plan, but as we're saying Rethink Folly Road, Folly Road doesn't end at the Wappoo Cut. It keeps going."

Councilmember Moody said, "Right. Start there."

Councilmember Seekings said, "That's correct."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I'll add, myself, that I think these same principles could apply to Savannah Highway, Highway 61, Sam Rittenberg, many major throughfares West Ashley. That would take us some time to do, but it's clearly our intent to try to do that. Yes, sir."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Lewis.

Councilmember Lewis said, "I just would like to say, can we go with the public hearing before?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Are there any other questions for Mr. Morgan from Council?"

No one else had any further questions.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would anyone like to be heard on this matter? Please come forward. Yes, ma'am."

1. Ledlie Bell said, "I'm Ledlie Bell of 1 Johnson Road in the Crescent, and I am here representing The Crescent Neighborhood Association, which met on Sunday and encouraged me to come and speak. As our Councilman has very aptly expressed, as has Councilmember Seekings, this is, in fact, Folly Road Boulevard. It is between two residential neighborhoods, The Crescent and Wappoo Heights. It also is between our neighborhood and South Windermere Shopping Center, and we have been, historically, a walkable neighborhood. We were green before it was in vogue, and in my children's day, they could walk safely. They could get their bikes and go to their first jobs at South Windermere. They could go to the public library. My neighbors are afraid to let their children cross Folly. It is doable, and it needs a tight timeframe as Councilmember Seekings has suggested. So, I just want to bring that to your attention and hope that Council, as a whole, will emphatically support the need for safety in this segment immediately after the bridge, where it took us five years to get South Carolina DOT to lower the speed limit. It is 40 mph as you come off the bridge. It is not 35 until you reach my street, Johnson Road. Nobody is looking at that point, and most people aren't observing the stop light at Formosa or at Yeamans. So, we've had cooperation from the City Police Department in terms of enforcement, but it is something where the weedy concrete can be made a pilot project, as I suggested to Ron Mitchum, where you show that with nothing to start with, you can have something, even if it means putting down astroturf that says we're not in a commercial corridor. We can make those sidewalks, as they did at Windermere Boulevard,

separate paving. It's very expensive, but so are the lives of children. They're worth investing in. So, I encourage you and thank you for your attention."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, Ms. Bell. Would anyone else like to be heard on this matter?"

No one else came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "The matter now comes before City Council. Your pleasure."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Waring.

Councilmember Waring said, "Can we get Mr. Morgan back? He had made some suggestions that conveyed to me, that we can, I'm paraphrasing, learn from what's going to be done between Maybank and Folly Road. What are some of the issues that we can bring forward, maybe as a City in the area of the Boulevard that the lady just spoke about?"

Mr. Morgan said, "Just in general, the idea of it is a complete street, just like the rest of Folly Road would be. We have an excellent bike and pedestrian system through that area. We have provisions for mass transit and provisions to help mass transit grow in the future, and then, aesthetics. I would argue that, other than the street itself, that's a very beautiful part of Folly Road on the sides because it's residential on both sides, but very attractive. I think those are all things that our Planning Department will help to move forward and try to exemplify in that portion of Folly Road as any development or changes to the roadway go forward."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Moody.

Councilmember Moody said, "I don't have any problem at all with this Rethink Folly Road. My statement would be if we're going to pass this ordinance having Rethink Folly Road, from our standpoint, from the City's standpoint, if we're going to amend this Plan, that we incorporate that extra stretch in our Plan here and not just ignore it. Not just say we think that this is a good idea, but, actually, as we amend this Plan, that we put that in our ordinance that that's what we want to do as a City. That's my point here."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Seekings said, "I think we should just make a notation and then come back and look at that record, but we just put in there 'Rethink All of Folly Road'."

Councilmember Moody said, "Regardless of who's going to pay for it."

Councilmember Seekings said, "We'll slide this in, and we'll build on it, but let's make sure we make it clear, because, as you know, the Century V Plan has come back to both help us and hurt us recently for things that we included or maybe omitted. So, let's just make sure we're all clear around this table. We're thinking about all of Folly Road, so when someone says the 'Century V Plan is the bible, and this is what we're sticking to', we got it. Thank you."

Councilmember Lewis said, "I move that we approve the Plan."

Councilmember Seekings said, "Second."

Councilmember Moody said, "With this adjustment to it."

The Clerk said, "Including all of Folly Road."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Including Folly Boulevard. So, we can make that distinction, because I believe it is Folly Boulevard all the way up to Wappoo Cut. I believe so. Is there any further discussion?"

No one else wished to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I would just like to comment and thank staff. This has been an excellent example of the different jurisdictions working together. The City of Charleston, the County of Charleston, the Town of James Island, and the Public Service District of James Island, all worked together on this Plan, and I think it's a great example for us moving forward, whenever we're dealing with issues on James and John Islands and West Ashley to involve and include the other jurisdictions. As a personal note, I live about a block away from Folly Boulevard, so I feel the pain or the fear sometimes of crossing Folly Road Boulevard, and, again, we can apply these concepts to other parts of our City. I think it's a very smart thing for us to do. Is there any further discussion?"

On a motion of Councilmember Lewis, seconded by Councilmember Seekings, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend the City of Charleston Century V 2010 Comprehensive Plan update, adopted by Charleston City Council on February 22, 2011, to incorporate the Rethink Folly Road Plan into said Century V Plan as hereinafter provided.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "The second public hearing is an ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance regarding 61 Cannon Street. This item has been deferred, but since it was advertised as a public hearing, if anyone would like to be heard on this matter, please come forward."

No one came forward to be heard.

There was no action taken on the following ordinance:

An ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Charleston by changing the Zone Map, which is a part thereof, so that 61 Cannon Street (Cannonborough-Elliottborough - Peninsula) (0.38 acre) (TMS #460-12-01-008) (Council District 4), be rezoned from Limited Business (LB) classification to Mlxed-Use Workforce Housing (MU-1/WH) classification. (Planning Commission recommends disapproval; requires ¾ vote of Council.) (DEFERRED)

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Hearing none, we'll move right along to Item E-3. This is a rezoning ordinance, as well, property on Bees Ferry Road. Would anyone like to be heard?"

No one came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We will bring the matter before City Council."

On a motion of Councilmember Riegel, one bill (Item E-3) received second reading. It passed second reading on a motion of Councilmember Seekings, and third reading on a motion of Councilmember Mitchell. On further motion of Councilmember Seekings, the rules were suspended, and the bill was immediately ratified as:

2016-012

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON BY CHANGING THE ZONE MAP, WHICH IS A PART THEREOF, SO THAT PROPERTY LOCATED ON BEES FERRY ROAD (WEST ASHLEY) (APPROXIMATELY 1.80 ACRES) (A PORTION OF TMS #301-00-00-027) (COUNCIL DISTRICT 5), BE REZONED FROM GATHERING PLACE (GP) CLASSIFICATION TO GENERAL BUSINESS (GB) CLASSIFICATION

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next is Item E-4, another zoning ordinance. Mr. Morgan."

Mr. Morgan said, "1065 Jenkins Road is a request to go from Single-Family Residential to Business Park, and this is an area that is transitioning to Business Park in general. This is a portion of Dupont/Wappoo, our 'DuWap' area, and we're actually going to have a public meeting tomorrow night that will have a lot more information on our joint planning exercise with the County for this area, but this is in accord with the efforts of that planning exercise, as well."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would anyone like to be heard?"

No one came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "The matter comes before City Council."

On a motion of Councilmember Riegel, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Charleston by changing the Zone Map, which is a part thereof, so that 1065 Jenkins Road (West Ashley) (1.06 acres) (TMS #351-14-00-011 and 351-14-00-068) (Council District 7), be rezoned from Single-Family Residential (SR-1) classification to Business Park (BP) classification.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "The public hearing on Item E-5 is for another rezoning ordinance, Mr. Morgan."

Mr. Morgan said, "This is a piece of property, 1708 Brantley Drive, that was annexed into the City a while back. The owner is interested in it having a General Business designation. It's actually at the corner of Folly Road, as you can see on the screen there (referring to the electronic presentation) or on your maps in front of you. So, it's in line with the other Commercial properties along Folly Road, and the request is to go from SR-1 to General Business. Both the Planning Commission and staff recommend approval."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would anyone like to be heard?"

No one came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "That matter comes before City Council."

On a motion of Councilmember Mitchell, one bill (Item E-5) received second reading. It passed second reading on a motion of Councilmember Gregorie, and third reading on a motion of Councilmember Gregorie. On further motion of Councilmember Mitchell, the rules were suspended, and the bill was immediately ratified as:

2016-014

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON BY CHANGING THE ZONE MAP, WHICH IS A PART THEREOF, SO THAT 1708 BRANTLEY DRIVE (JAMES ISLAND) (0.46 ACRE) (TMS #425-03-00-035) (COUNCIL DISTRICT 6), ANNEXED INTO THE CITY OF CHARLESTON MAY 2, 2006 (#2006-151), BE REZONED FROM SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (SR-1) CLASSIFICATION TO GENERAL BUSINESS (GB) CLASSIFICATION.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I'm getting into the swing of it. Item E-6 is another ordinance for zoning, Mr. Morgan."

Mr. Morgan said, "Yes, sir. 1847 Elsey Drive in West Ashley. It's a zoning of a recently annexed property in the City to Single-Family Residential (SR-1), and that's in line with other properties that are already in the neighborhood that are nearby."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would anyone like to be heard?"

No one came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Now it's before Council."

On a motion of Councilmember Lewis, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Charleston by changing the Zone Map, which is a part thereof, so that 1847 Elsey Drive (West Ashley) (0.44 acre) (TMS #350-01-00-083) (Council District 7), annexed into the City of Charleston December 1, 2015 (#2015-182), be zoned Single-Family Residential (SR-1) classification.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Item E-7."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Mr. Mayor, we could combine E-7 and E-8. Both have been annexed and are to change to Single-Family."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Is there any objection to combining Items E-7 and E-8?"

The Clerk said, "Mayor, read the addresses of both."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Yes, just put the address out."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "They are 1140 San Juan Avenue and 2112 Saint James Drive. Would anyone like to be heard about rezoning these to Single-Family Residential?"

No one came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Hearing none, the matter comes before City Council."

On a motion of Councilmember Mitchell, seconded by Councilmember Lewis, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following bills:

An ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Charleston by changing the Zone Map, which is a part thereof, so that 1140 San Juan Avenue (Maryville-Ashleyville - West Ashley) (0.18 acre) (TMS #418-06-00-043) (Council District 3), annexed into the City of Charleston December 15, 2015 (#2015-193), be zoned Single-Family Residential (SR-1) classification.

An ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Charleston by changing the Zone Map, which is a part thereof, so that 2112 Saint James Drive (Riverland Terrace – James Island) (0.24 acre) (TMS #343-02-00-074) (Council District 11), annexed into the City of Charleston December 15, 2015 (#2015-194), be zoned Single-Family Residential (SR-1) classification.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next is Item E-9, an ordinance to rezone 1119 Wappoo Road. Mr. Morgan."

Mr. Morgan said, "This is a shopping center that was recently annexed to the corner of Wappoo and Ashley River Road. It's an existing shopping center. It used to have a grocery store in it. It has a number of shops that continue to operate there, and it would come into the City under our General Business designation. Both staff and Planning Commission recommend approval."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would anyone like to be heard on the matter first?"

No one came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Hearing none, it comes before City Council."

On a motion of Councilmember Riegel, one bill (Item E-9) received second reading. It passed second reading on a motion of Councilmember Mitchell, and third reading on a motion of Councilmember Waring. On further motion of Councilmember Mitchell, the rules were suspended and the bill was immediately ratified as:

2016-013 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON BY CHANGING THE ZONE MAP, WHICH IS A PART THEREOF, SO THAT 1119 WAPPOO ROAD (WEST ASHLEY) (4.94 ACRES) (TMS #351-15-00-005) (COUNCIL DISTRICT 7), BE ZONED GENERAL BUSINESS (GB) CLASSIFICATION

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next is an ordinance to have a temporary moratorium on the Gathering Place zoning designation. Mr. (Jacob) Lindsey."

Councilmember Seekings said, "It's on our agenda for until tomorrow, just so you know, for public comment. It's until the 27th."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "That's correct."

Mr. Lindsey said, "This is the second reading on the moratorium, which has been in effect since November. We obviously recommended the option of this moratorium, but we also recommend the extension of the moratorium, as well. We have been working with our Advisory Committee. We think we've been making great progress, but we would like, out of an abundance of caution, more time to continue to work on this. Our goal would be to deliver it back to you by March 11th. So, we recommend to Council and the Mayor to extend the moratorium, should you see fit."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Are there any questions for Mr. Lindsey?"

Councilmember Moody said, "The ordinance, Mr. Mayor, is the second reading, but it's amended to add 45 days to it."

The Clerk said, "Yes, but it won't receive the third reading. It's an extension. The motion is to extend the moratorium. That's what a motion will be after the public hearing."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Move for approval that we extend the moratorium."

Councilmember Waring said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We're going to have a public hearing, but I do want the public to know that this Council intends to move to extend the moratorium until March 11th, which was the staff's recommendation as well. Now, we have a public hearing. Would anyone like to be heard on the moratorium? Yes, sir. Please come forward."

1. Darren Troy Mullinax said, "Good evening, Council, Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Please state your name and address."

Mr. Mullinax said, "My name is Darren Troy Mullinax. I live at 1153 Cottage Road on James Island. I'm a member of the James Island Town Council. I'm here representing that body this evening. I just wanted to thank you for affording me the opportunity to be here this evening. It's good seeing you again, Mr. Mayor. Basically, again, I authored a resolution in the past, last Thursday, basically, requesting a moratorium until changes in the City of Charleston land use ordinance are finalized and receive final approval from the City Council so the necessary studies can be concluded. So, that's all I really have to say, but, again, thank you for your time."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much, and we received your resolution and thank you very much for it. Yes, sir."

The Clerk said, "Mr. Mayor, I might add that Councilmembers have five letters on their desks that came from people, who ask for the moratorium to be extended, as well."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would anyone else like to be heard? Yes, ma'am. Please state your name and address. Thank you."

2. Lindsay Hamrick said, "Hi, my name is Lindsay Hamrick. I live on James Island. My question is, we've been a little bit confused about the process of this moratorium. We thought that we were coming today to hear the results of what the City has been doing so far to revise this zoning. I guess there's still nothing to announce. A lot of residents feel pretty left out. So, my question is, where are we in the process, if we are now extending it for 45 days? Is this our public

hearing now, or do we get to talk to you after we see the results of the changes in the zoning? I think that's what Town Council passed last Thursday is, can we just wait until we get the recommendation from the City? Can we extend it that long? Why do we have to put a stamp of 45 days because last time it didn't work, and we didn't finish in time. So, I'd just like for Council to consider extending this until we get all of the recommendations from the City on how to make this better, and we would very much like to be involved in the process. Wherever we need to be, we'll come and listen. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. Thank you very much. Would anyone else like to be heard? Yes, ma'am."

3. Norie Bregman said, "My name is Norie Bregman, and I live on James Island. I just wanted to understand why there is an application in process with respect to the Maybank Gathering Place when this temporary moratorium is supposed to be in place? Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, ma'am. Thank you very much. I think we'll answer those questions when we go back to discussion. Would anyone else like to be heard?"

No one else came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Hearing none, this matter now comes before City Council."

Councilmember Gregorie moved for approval, and Councilmember Waring seconded the motion to give second reading and extend the moratorium.

Councilmember Seekings said, "Of what?"

The Clerk said, "Approval and extend the moratorium."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Correct, to extend the moratorium."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "To extend the moratorium until March 11th."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Seekings said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor, members of Council. This seems to me to be somewhat of a torture process from the name Gathering Place, which now couldn't have more negative connotations if you tried, to the whole input. I don't understand why we, as a Council, don't start afresh. I don't know what's coming back to us and what's been going on, but if it's something that's called Gathering Place, and it's a rethink of something that's already on the books, it's going to be met with disfavor by the public, and, I suspect, by Council, and now we put another 45 days on it. If we just abandon the whole notion of where we are with Gathering Place and start afresh, that seems to me to be the way we should be doing this. So, a moratorium is great, but really what this is, during the moratorium, is a rethinking of this whole thing, not just in one place, but in many places. My observation, and this is across the river from my district, but in a City that I care a lot about, is that maybe one Gathering Place ordinance doesn't fit all properties, and that's going to be an issue that we're going to have to take up. Each property is located with different things around it or lack thereof, like public transportation, infrastructure and the like. Are we ever going to be able to craft an ordinance that speaks to, basically, the birth of a development from beginning to end that suits what we thought was going to be a Gathering Place concept from the beginning? So, from my eye, I think we should be talking about starting all over, rather than extending a moratorium."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "With the pleasure of Council, I'd like to ask Jacob Lindsey, our Planning Director, to give us a brief update on where we are in reevaluating the Gathering Place ordinance and maybe answer the question about the application that's in place."

Mr. Lindsey said, "So, I'll begin with the process of updating. We have heard very clearly from the public, we've heard very clearly from my own staff and from elected officials about the problems that exist with the current Gathering Place zoning. What we're doing is amending the ordinance and/or reflecting significant changes, and I hope that we will be able to amend the name as well. That process has been done by one which is our standard process of having an Advisory Committee appointed, which includes Councilmembers. It includes representatives from neighborhoods, and it's a very legitimate and thorough process. It's not an overnight process for us to create these amendments. So, the answer is that we are, in conjunction with this Committee and staff, drafting the ordinance with recommendations, which we will bring as fast as we possibly can. We will be happy to post that online and take comments, as well as have its regular public hearing process through the Planning Commission, as well as City Council. So, it will have its due process in terms of public hearing.

In terms of the application and the moratorium, the moratorium applies to all properties, which are zoned Gathering Place, and it applies to any submittals which would be received on those properties after the original passage in November and currently. There was, however, a submittal received to Design Review Board (DRB) one day before the passage of the moratorium. We are legally obligated to process this. However, the applicant is deferring the hearing at DRB because they are waiting on our recommendations. Our goal would be to create an amended ordinance, which is so good that everyone would agree that it's the way to go, and that that would be the preferred route."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Gregorie.

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Yes, Mr. Mayor, I'm one of the Councilmembers that is a part of the Advisory Committee, and I do think that we are making progress. I think that once we've completed this task, we will virtually have a new ordinance. We're already talking about not using the term Gathering Place anymore, though the alternative is not much better. We'll have to work on that, but you will definitely not hear that term, or that term will not be a part of any amendments that we put forward. I think three Councilmembers on the Committee and a large contingency of residents of the Island, as well as a representative from The Standard and the Core, are also a part of the discussions, and they're making recommendations accordingly. I do think that this moratorium will provide us with additional time, so that we can do the kind of tasks and job that I know this Council wants us to do, but it definitely will not be the same ordinance. It's going to be, I would imagine, at least 60 or 70 percent different from what it is now, particularly if we adopt some things that we know have been acceptable to Council as it relates to what we are doing on the Upper Peninsula. We are mimicking some of that language, as well as trying to incorporate some PUD language in the new rule. So, I do think that we are making substantial progress in changing this, and we do have the people at the table who are pretty open in terms of how we can create an ordinance that would be acceptable across the board."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Waring.

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Jacob (Mr. Lindsey), can you tell me if the current application requires a traffic study?"

Mr. Lindsey said, "The traffic study is required at a level of technical review, which the applicant has not yet obtained. It is not required for the DRB submittal that they have sent us."

Councilmember Waring said, "Is that traffic study required prior to it coming back to Council?"

Mr. Lindsey said, "I don't know the answer to that. I don't believe that it is. It's a function of our technical review process. It won't come back to Council. After DRB, it doesn't go to Council."

Councilmember Waring said, "As I understand that, we would be in a position of voting on that current application without knowing the traffic effect."

Mr. Lindsey said, "No, sir."

Councilmember Waring said, "I'm talking about Council."

Mr. Lindsey said, "The application, which is through Design Review Board, would not come to Council and, furthermore, it has been deferred continually by the applicant pending the outcome of the amended ordinances. So, City Council would not be voting upon that application with or without a traffic study because its Design Review Board proceeding wouldn't go to Council or Planning Commission."

Councilmember Waring said, "Hypothetically, this application that's already on file, whatever you all come up with or whatever we come up with as an amended ordinance, that's the ordinance they'll be going under?"

Mr. Lindsey said, "If they were to withdraw that application, that would be the case."

Councilmember Waring said, "What happens if they do not withdraw the application?"

Mr. Lindsey said, "They would go before the Design Review Board with the current application."

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Wilson.

Councilmember Wilson said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. What Councilmember Waring said is very unnerving to me. Essentially, what we're getting ourselves into is crafting a new ordinance, and we can't tell you how it affects the Maybank property until after you pass the ordinance. That's not going to fly on James Island. What we're looking at with this are two separate issues. We have an overarching ordinance that we know flawed and is not working. That's great with some of the work that we're doing. We have made some progress. There are some things that I don't agree with, but that's the nature of the business. That may well apply to

a Gathering Place in some area of the City at some point in time. However, with the Maybank property, it's too piecemealed already. Some of the changes that we are proposing that might mimic the Upper Peninsula, may actually create more density on the Maybank property. I will not be a party to that. I can't take that back to James Island and to islanders who are greatly concerned. I'm not sure which one of my colleagues made the point that, I think it was Councilmember Seekings, a Gathering Place is not suited nor is every parcel of property suited for a particular ordinance. How did you phrase it, Councilmember?"

Councilmember Seekings said, "I'm not sure that we can craft a Gathering Place ordinance that will suit and fit every parcel that comes before that ordinance."

Councilmember Riegel said, "They have variables."

Councilmember Wilson said, "That is correct. I think we have to look at our Century V Plan, which clearly states that development will be in context with the surrounding properties, with the surrounding neighborhoods. We certainly don't see tall buildings regardless of whether the land falls away or not. We don't see tall buildings in a bedroom community, which is, essentially, James Island. I would like to think that we're making some sort of progress with Residential versus Commercial, that sort of thing, but I see several different ways that developers will try and get around that retail component. This whole thing is still fraught with danger for the Maybank property, and we've got to do better. That personal property never needed to be zoned that way, and I'm very concerned about lumping it in with a new Gathering Place ordinance, whatever we end up calling it, semantics. It's still the same result on the property no matter what we call it."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Shahid.

Councilmember Shahid said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Then, Councilmember Riegel."

Councilmember Riegel said, "I'll defer to him."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Councilmember Shahid was first."

Councilmember Shahid said, "You go ahead."

Councilmember Riegel said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, Councilman Shahid. I wanted to just revisit what Councilman Seekings had commented, especially with regard to The Standard. We certainly don't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Councilman Gregorie, who I admire quite a bit, I know you've put in a lot of work. Sixty to 70 percent of the ordinance is going to be reworked. I think that's what I heard you say, but I was still kind of interested. Jacob (Lindsey), Mr. Mayor, Councilman Seekings, what is your thought process or thinking outside the box to just throw this whole thing out and then start over? What are you thinking when you said that? I would just be interested in hearing your input?"

Councilmember Seekings said, "I'm happy to speak to that."

Councilmember Riegel said, "No, I'm asking Councilmember Seekings a question, so I'm just interested."

Councilmember Seekings said, "Well, it goes a little bit back to what Councilmember Gregorie said in his observation. He's been tied closely to this because he's a part of the Committee that's been looking at it, and we're leaving it to them to do this hard work. One of the things that caught my ear was that he's going to be looking at an ordinance that's 60 or 70 percent different. Well, to use an analogy, if you're going back and retrofitting a building, once you get to 60 or 70 percent of a building, it's a new building. So, if you're going back to 60 to 70 percent of the original ordinance being changed, it's a new ordinance. I don't know the answer, but I don't think the answer is the current ordinance called Gathering Place that's not working. I just don't think, I don't have it all mapped out here in front of me, and I'm not sure all the properties would even be subject currently to this Gathering Place zoning that are either in process, coming to the process or going to be subject to the process, but my sense is that one size will not fit all. If we're going to 70 percent new, we ought to call it new, think it new, draft it new, and putting a 45-days number, it might take longer than that, if you do it right. We have to do this right. I think the message we heard from Councilmember Wilson from the get-go all the way through this process, from the Town of James Island, from the County representatives, is that we probably, in application, haven't done it right. So, this is our chance to fix it, and I just hope that we do it that way. So, that's sort of my more than two cents worth."

Councilmember Riegel said, "Thank you, Councilmember Seekings, and I appreciate that. I have the sense that we're trying to take a square peg and put it in a round hole, and, at the end of the day, we still have a square peg and a round hole. I don't want to, again, discount Councilman Gregorie's hard work because I know how he does things. It's very thorough, but I'm almost agreeing with you, Mike, (referring to Councilmember Seekings) to let's just wipe the board clean, and let's start over if we're only keeping 30 percent of whatever is preexisting, but that's just my comment. Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Shahid.

Councilmember Shahid said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I understand that this ordinance that we've been discussing, this Gathering Place ordinance, is going to be a Citywide ordinance. It's going to affect properties in different parts of the City. We just discussed Rethink Folly Road, and this property that we're dealing with is on James Island, and Folly Road takes up a good part of James Island. My concern is, if we're going to go back, we're going to revisit this whole thing, as Councilmember Seekings had suggested, perhaps, if you haven't done this, I would certainly urge that the staff look at this in comparison or in conjunction with the Rethink Folly Road project. This is the problem we're getting ourselves into, and that's what I'm afraid of. So, are we piecemealing these projects, these overlays, these Gathering Place Ordinances, whatever we call these things, and does it run into conflict with the Rethink Folly Road Plan that we just discussed? I don't know, I'm asking those questions as we go through this process and we reinvent this, and we look at the big picture. That's what my main concern is, why it's not on Folly Road. This project, if approved, will have such a tremendous impact on Folly Road. Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Gregorie.

Councilmember Gregorie said, "I would suggest that we give the advisory committee an extension, and give us the opportunity to rework this piece. You have three very strong Councilmembers on that Committee. We are not going to allow it out of the Advisory Committee, unless it's something that we are comfortable with. I really think that we need to allow the Committee to continue. We already know that once the Committee is completed with it, it will have to go to the appropriate City Committees. It will have to go to Community

Development. There is a large transportation piece in it, so, it's going to have to go before our Traffic and Transportation Committee. I think that will then provide us with additional opportunity to analyze the piece and make recommendations accordingly to the full body. What we're doing now is hashing and going through and disagreeing, and, trust me, there are a lot of disagreements as we go forward, but I do think that we should try our best to complete this task, as Council has required us to do. If we get to a point where we're loggerheads, then it won't even make it out of our advisory committee. You have Councilmembers, I feel, that are strong enough that will not allow that to happen."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Wilson.

Councilmember Wilson said, "I had already spoken once, but were there any other Councilmembers who wanted to speak for the first time. Councilmember Williams, do you want to go first? I'll take my turn after everyone has had one go-round."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Williams.

Councilmember Williams said, "I would suggest, on the issue of mobility, the existing is 'D', that's walking, biking, driving, transit. If we're going from a 'D' to what is best, we need to stay the course. Now, I understand that we have a complex issue, but we have an issue, which is existing as a 'D'. At the same time, we have to move forward because it shows the people that are coming that something has to happen. So, I would stay the course, as Councilman Dudley (Gregorie) said. Stay the course, and let us move forward because what exists is a 'D', and to get from a 'D' to an 'A' is a big gap. Let's stay the course. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Wagner.

Councilmember Wagner said, "I want to pursue, just for a second, to add a little bit onto Councilmember Seekings' comments and ask you a couple of questions, if it's alright. One size does not fit all. There are multiple Gathering Places out there now. We are concerned right now on the one that's causing the most trouble, that's really it. It's affecting Johns Island, it's affecting James Island, affecting Folly Beach, Folly Road, everything up and down that corridor is affected by the Gathering Place. The Committee is specifically looking at it, but there are more. You know which ones they are. I know about the one West Ashley. There's one on Maybank and another one up in the Upper Peninsula. How many more do we have, so, we'll know if one size could fit all?"

Mr. Lindsey said, "There are only three Gathering Place locations in the City of Charleston. One is at the location of Maybank Highway, which you all know of. The second is at the West Ashley Circle, and the third is on Cainhoy at the location on Clements Ferry and I-526. Those are the only three Gathering Place locations in the City of Charleston."

Councilmember Wagner said, "Okay. I want to follow-up just a second with that."

Mr. Lindsey said, "That was a small parcel, which was taken from Gathering Place, but there are other parcels there, which are still Gathering Place, but those are the only three locations in the City, which are zoned Gathering Place."

Councilmember Riegel was excused from the Chamber at 5:49 p.m.

Councilmember Wagner said, "I think where we're having a real issue is the one on Maybank. There are multiple owners of those properties. It's like we took a commercial area and said, 'okay, that's part of the Gathering spot'. Then, here comes the residential living facility, and apartment complexes. What's happening is when you put them all together, I think that's how we are having the problem. We have four or five pieces, and if they continue to pile up, we look down the road and traffic is stopped all the way to almost the Atlantic Ocean by way of Maybank and River Road. So, when we look at a specific piece, it might look good, but when all those pieces come together, we have a problem. The only way this works, as near as I can tell, is it's all owned by one owner, and I don't believe that's true with West Ashley. It's pretty close, on the West Ashley Circle. Now, one owner can do like they do, as an example, there's a place called Reston, Virginia, and its town center, Reston Virginia Town Center. Now, this is about a one square mile area. There are four parking garages, about ten apartment complexes that go 15 stories, but they're on multiple streets. It's just like a little city, and they have Joseph Banks. they have 32 restaurants, they have a hotel there, that's a single ownership LLC. One guy owns it all. Well, one corporation owns it all. They keep the Reston Police out of there. They have rent-a-cops on every corner just to make sure, and that's my idea of a Gathering Place. I'm thinking that if we have multiple owners doing multiple things, and nowhere is there a cohesive 'this is what it's going to look like, and we can enforce it', I don't see how it will work. That's just me personally, but I agree one size does not fit all. I know what Councilmembers Gregorie and Wilson are doing. We're trying to make something work that may or may not work, and that will be up to you to come back and tell us. But, conceptually, it's not possible that I can see, unless there's one ownership or one general management that pulls it altogether. Thank you."

Councilmember Riegel returned to the Chamber at 5:51 p.m.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, Councilmember Wagner. So, let me add that, admittedly, I've only been officially on the job for two weeks, but I haven't found a single person in City government or a citizen that likes the Gathering Place zoning yet."

Laughter filled the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg continued, "And I'm one of them. With all due respect to the folks that put this designation into place some years ago and then zoned this particular property on Maybank Highway, and even the other properties that were Gathering Places, what we ended up with on Maybank Highway is not what was really intended to happen. I think we all, collectively, admitted it was a mistake. There used to be a couple of other Gathering Place properties in the City, and they requested to have it removed. So, it obviously doesn't work. Councilmember Seekings, I think, is correct in that it needs to be totally revamped. I think the process that we have in place is, in fact, doing that and Councilmembers Gregorie, Wilson and Moody will see that we get a good result of renaming and redefining what formerly was the Gathering Place will become for those few properties that remain with that zoning. So, this ordinance before us is just to extend the moratorium, which can be extended again, if need be, to allow this Committee to come back to Council and have a new ordinance with a new name and a new designation. It will have a full public process that will go to both our Planning Commission and back to City Council, so there will be the opportunities for two public hearings. The matter of what happens to Maybank Highway going forward is complicated because of the fact that the applicant did file an application on the day before the moratorium went into effect, and we can't change that at this point. So, we have to put our best foot forward, come up with a new designation and, hopefully, if we can ascribe that new definition to Maybank Highway, at least we'll get some resolution to the remainder of what happens there."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Wilson.

Councilmember Wilson said, "Thank you. I want to make a couple of other comments regarding this and the ongoing process. I won't and simply cannot sign off on any ordinance that even gives the developer the possibility of increasing the density even further because we have parcels on that property that have not yet been sold. There's an approximately one acre parcel that's right out front, nicely wooded right now. It would be great to keep it that way. Unfortunately, it's for sale and who knows what's going to go in. Under the current ordinance and, perhaps, under the future ordinance, that could be even more apartments. We have Mr. Hofford's potential assisted living community or independent living community in the back. He's having grievous problems with that and his drainage system. If he abandons that project, we could have more housing there. So, those are the kind of concerns that I'm looking for. Meanwhile, we have Folly Road, which is failing in level of service. Maybank, which used to be able to handle capacity, is greatly reaching its capacity, and there are thousands of homes that will come on line on James Island, and we need to zoom out a little bit and look at this in the greater context. I know this comment was made at the last meeting, 'oh, James Islanders don't like anything. They're anti-development. They don't want to see anything built'. No, that's not entirely true. We worked as kind of a coalition on the Island with Broadstone, those apartments there at the old junkyard. No, a lot of people didn't like them. That land wasn't going to be a park. It was contaminated land that failed its Phase II. What do we want to do there? It's zoned Light Industrial. It could have been a big box. It could have been a mall type, so, who knows? Apartments, in the end, were the lesser of all of the evils.

I think I've walked a very, very good balance beam on the Island regarding development being 'yes, this, within the confines of the law, is allowable. The developer has been a pretty good guy. No, this one needs to be modified'. So, I am not pro-development. I'm not antidevelopment. I take it case by case, but look at what the County is getting ready to approve down Folly Road, which is 300 condos, two parking garages, and retail. That's coming on line. The City and County, yes, they talk, but we don't necessarily plan cohesively as to what is going to happen. Councilmember Lewis asked this question about four meetings ago, 'how many homes do we have coming on line with Johns Island', and no one knew an answer. Let's just toss some hypotheticals out there. Let's say there are 2,000 homes coming on line, and we're going to generate 3,000 cars. I'm just pulling figures out of the air, gentlemen, 3,000 cars. We have an absolute win with public transportation and 25 percent of those people choose to take public transportation, and another 10 percent of the general public says, 'you know what, now that's its available, I didn't do it before, and I've lived here for 20 years. I'll take public transportation too'. We've taken those 3,000 cars, and we've only cut them down to 2,000 cars. Nevertheless, that's still that much more converging on that part of the Island. So, I think we need to think more holistically. We need to plan more cohesively with all of the other moving parts. Whether we like it or not, whether it's in our jurisdiction or not, they are ultimately going to impact. So, those are the sorts of things that I think we need to look at. I mean, this developer has not budged. When this first came about, and we had that silly public forum at Harbor View Elementary, the plan was nothing, and nothing had changed when we brought the new and improved plan to Harbor View that evening. Residents were outraged. They had to write their comments down because there was no public comment. Comments, of course, have never been shared. So, there has been outrage and opposition to this since it first came onto the books, and we haven't seen any modification. I've been talking about Gathering Place, as you all know, for the last couple of years, asking for an explanation, asking for a workshop, that sort of thing. It was put off and put off, and, now, it has reached absolutely the boiling point with this particular parcel of land, and I'm going to fight tooth and nail to see this modified and to see it acceptable to the Island for all the reasons that I have been talking about over these months."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. We have a motion of the floor, and it has been seconded to extend the moratorium until March 11th. Is there any further discussion?"

On a motion of Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Councilmember Waring, City Council voted unanimously to give second reading to the following bill and extend the moratorium until March 11, 2016.

An ordinance to amend Chapter 54 of the Code of the City of Charleston (Zoning Ordinance) by adding to Article 9 thereof a new Part 6 providing for a temporary moratorium until March 11, 2016, on the processing of development applications and issuing of permits for properties zoned Gathering Place (GP) (AS AMENDED).

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next, we have our last public hearing on an ordinance that would allow some changes to buffer requirements for certain properties. Mr. Lindsey."

Mr. Lindsey said, "This relates to the specific use of self-storage/mini-storage facilities, and the current zoning that we have on the books dates to the late 80's, early 1990's. My zoning staff has recommended that we allow our DRB and BAR (Board of Architectural Review) to modify the zoning to allow the setbacks to change on this type of use. Importantly, the DRB did not exist when this zoning ordinance was created, and the BAR's jurisdiction has been significantly expanded. This empowers the design review boards to have more control over the location of mini and self-storage facilities on their sites. Staff recommends approval of this."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would anyone like to be heard? Yes, sir. This is regarding changing landscape buffers."

1. Anthony G. Bryant said, "The issue with the mini-storages. Anthony G. Bryant, 2123 Courtland Avenue, Charleston, SC 29403. John (Mayor Tecklenburg), I did receive a checkmark from the Department of Social Services, the Department of Revenue and also the IRS, as well, for the record. The issue with all zoning done under your administration, in my opinion, would have to be checked off as an arrangement of some sort, being of your involvement in the many developments in the area. I hope, as a Mayor, that you check yourself as you begin to start approving these zonings, in particular, all over the whole City. As it was said in the Mayor's race, it's going to be said now, that we hope that there is no perception of any arrangements being made by you or any developer you're affiliated with."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Would anyone else like to be heard?"

No one else came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "The matter is before City Council."

On a motion by Councilmember Seekings, seconded by Councilmember Waring, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend Chapter 54 of the Code of the City of Charleston (Zoning Ordinance) by amending Section 54-207 to permit landscape buffer and building setback requirements along street rights-of-way for mini-storage/self-storage facilities

to be reduced or eliminated if the reduction or elimination is deemed appropriate by the Board of Architectural Review or Design Review Board.

Councilmember Seekings said, "Mayor Tecklenburg."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Seekings said, "Before we go to the next item on our agenda, can I ask you, sir, and my fellow colleagues, if we can take one item out of turn, which is J-1, the Committee on Traffic and Transportation Report? I'm going to sneak out and go to the I-26 Alt presentation downtown for a few minutes. I'm the Chairman of the Committee, and I'd like to give that report before I leave. So, is that okay?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would that be the pleasure of Council?"

By unanimous consent, City Council received Item J-1, the Traffic and Transportation Report, out of order.

Councilmember Seekings said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. The Committee on Traffic and Transportation met today, January 26, 2016 at 3:45 p.m. All members were in attendance, including Mayor Tecklenburg for the first time. We had one application for Original Certificate of Public Convenience, which was Charleston Downtown Taxi, LLC. It was approved, and then we took up an amendment of an ordinance on the City books, Chapter 19, Section 418(3), 419(a), and 292(c). The net effect of that is we're going to, for those in the public, raise the fee it will cost you to get a boot removed that's been put on your car either in public or in private from \$35 to \$50. It passed unanimously, and I will just tell you we did a survey of jurisdictions around the State and in Savannah, and at \$50, we will still be the cheapest jurisdiction in the Southeast to get a boot taken off of your car. So, I would move for adoption of this report, including the amendment of that ordinance."

Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I have a motion and a second. Is there any further discussion?"

On a motion of Councilmember Seekings, seconded by Councilmember Lewis, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the Committee on Traffic and Transportation Report as presented:

---INSERT TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION REPORT---

- (i) Application for Original Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity:
 -- Charleston Downtown Taxi, LLC (Taxi)
- (ii) An ordinance to amend the <u>Code of the City of Charleston</u>, South Carolina, Chapter 19, Sections 418(3), 419(a), and 292(c) to change the maximum charge for a nonconsensual boot from \$35.00 to \$50.00. (As Amended)

First reading was given to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend the Code of the City of Charleston, South Carolina, Chapter

19, Sections 418(3), 419(a), and 292(c) to change the maximum charge for a nonconsensual boot from \$35.00 to \$50.00. (AS AMENDED)

Councilmember Seeking said, "I would like to thank my fellow Councilmembers for indulging me, and thank you, Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, Councilmember Seekings. Next, we have the approval of our last City Council meeting minutes."

On a motion of Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2016 City Council meeting.

Councilmember Seekings was excused from the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next, we will have our Citizens Participation Period. I do want to share a couple of rules our Council passed at our last City Council meeting and will, in fact, give second reading tonight. I don't know how often you all actually read our rules because they probably don't change much from year to year, but I did want to clarify a couple of things about our public participation period. It can be a period of up to 30 minutes. This is quoted from our rules that 'normally utterances come from our City Council with the exception of public hearings' and 'during a period of 30 minutes of each regular meeting, the Mayor may recognize citizens of Charleston who wish to address Council on matters of City business'. So, I do ask that citizens who would like to participate do address some matter of City business when you address the Council during the public participation period. In addition, as for our own Councilmembers and the public as well, I'm going to quote that 'any person who speaks at a City Council meeting shall conduct themselves or herself in a manner appropriate to the decorum of the meeting and shall not use any profane, abusive or obscene language, nor any fighting words or otherwise engage in disorderly conduct'. I will admit that determining what is abusive language can be subjective, but I just ask everyone to be mindful of the decorum and try to maintain comments to the Council to be matters regarding City business. So, our Citizens Participation Period begins. Who would like to speak?"

The Clerk said, "Mayor, are we giving them two minutes?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "How many would like to address Council tonight? I think a limit of 2.5 minutes."

1. Robert New said, "Mayor Tecklenburg, members of Council, my name is Robert New. I actually live on Folly Beach. I don't know if that disqualifies me or not. It's not even part of the United States."

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Mr. New continued, "I appreciate your public service. Two weeks ago, an anti-Semite walked up to this mic and addressed you in this Chamber. This is a serious matter. First and foremost, he certainly should not be stifled. He certainly should be allowed to speak, and he certainly should keep the public comment period. Having said that, his comments were beyond offensive. This City has experienced an incredible act of racism recently. It is incumbent upon all of us to block, stop and make sure that racist comments and anti-Semitic comments are not allowed and that they're responded to. The Jewish community goes back to the founding of the

Colony. There's a synagogue that was founded in the 1700's in this community. Jews have been part of the culture, of the business, and of politics, including myself, for many, many generations. So, I have a simple request for each member of Council, repudiate the anti-Semitic comments. That's my simple request that you do that today. When comments are so outrageous and so offensive, they need to be responded to. As Jews, we know that the silence could be deafening. We've learned that lesson in history. So, I'm asking you tonight, as public officials in this historic Chamber, to speak out. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Yes, sir."

Mohammed Idris said, "Evening, Mayor Tecklenburg, City Council, and ladies and gentlemen. Mohammed Idris. I come here tonight because this is a legislative board, and it conducts the law of the City. In the streets, you hear everything. The majority of our people, African Americans, they don't come to City Council meetings. They go to religious meetings. They don't participate in City Council, and I don't see them with any representatives down here. I come before you tonight asking you to stop this, to bury this white and black thing. Every time someone says something to a black person, if it's a white person, someone says that is racist. Jesus was not a racist, and he wasn't anti-Semitic when he went into the synagogue and called the people in the synagogue a bunch of thieves and robbers. When Moses came from off of the mountaintop and met the children of Israel worshipping a golden calf, and he condemned them, he was not an anti-Semitic for dealing with wrong. So, if I'm wrong, and you charge me with being wrong, I shouldn't say that you are a racist. We are dealing with the wrong. What I am saying is, the problem we have with each other is not about the color of skin, it's about the state of our mind. Also, I would like to say tonight that we should be ashamed of ourselves here in the City of Charleston how we are opening all of these alcohol bars while calling this the Holy City. The Post and Courier did not give me justice in their reporting when they told the public that I was a strong critic of Mayor Riley over the years, and they did not tell how I used to support Mayor Riley. Another thing I would like to bring to our attention, our mind, is that there are three major religions here in this City: Judaism, Christianity and Islam."

The Clerk called time.

Mr. Idris continued, "If you are going to find the devil..."

The Clerk called time.

Mr. Idris continued, "...look into religion. That's where you're going to find the devil. You're not going to find him in the bar."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. It's time."

Mr. Idris continued, "Okay. You are not going to find him in the bar. Thank you. I appreciate that."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. Who else would like to be heard? Yes, ma'am."

3. Ruth Ballou said, "Thank you for giving me this opportunity to address you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Please state your name and address."

Ms. Ballou said, "Ruth Ballou, I'm a resident of James Island, not a resident of the City. I

guess that's part of my question because James Island is part County, party City, part of the Town of James Island. My concerns are related to traffic and speed on the Island and in the City in general. I grew up here. I was born in Charleston, grew up in West Ashley. When I was a child, I remember being frustrated that this was the only place that I've ever been where everyone drove below the speed limit. Now, the speed limit seems to be nonexistent. It's the bumper of the car in front of you, and if there is no bumper, then you're free to go 80 mph. I've become afraid to go across the Ravenel Bridge. Every time, there's someone who goes past going 80 or 90 mph, cutting in front. Where is the traffic enforcement? On Folly Road, there used to be regular traffic stops by the Wappoo Bridge. I haven't seen a policeman there in a year. In the communities, I have spoken to other people, we are all concerned about the blatant disregard of our 25 mph speed limit on our small roads. I've tried to call, I've gotten no response. I've been calling for two years about speeding school buses on my road. That's not to say there's no response, but there seems to be an inability to actually get something done. On Maybank Highway, we have one pedestrian crosswalk at Riverland Shopping Center to the very vibrant theatre and the restaurant. It's not long enough. The cars speed through. They're way over 40 mph. We have the bus that goes on James Island, the 31 bus, which makes a loop. It's not back and forth. In the morning, people on Fleming Road have to cross Maybank Highway, without a pedestrian crosswalk, to catch the bus to go to work that takes them all the way around the Island before they get downtown. This is unacceptable. I've been very, very encouraged tonight to hear all of these thoughtful people speaking about your concern about our future. I just hope that we see some more immediate, quick action on some of these transportation issues."

The Clerk called time.

Ms. Ballou said, "Thank you. Thank you very much."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Miss, would you repeat the street you live on?"

Ms. Ballou said, "I live on Riverland Drive and Medway Road in Riverland Terrace."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Yes, sir."

Pat Welch said, "My name is Pat Welch, I live across the street from The Standard, and I have an office down on Broad and East Bay. I asked to be on the Committee for changing the zoning. I didn't make it, so, I'll try and get my points here. The current development Gathering Place on Maybank was really brought about with some really shaky foundations. We pressed the original developer on how he processed, and, as I understand it, his zoning requirement was that he had to notify the people in James Island in writing that it was coming. I had to go to about ten different meetings and bring that question up ten different times before he finally admitted that not the first letter was written, not the first letter was sent out. So, if we're going to have a new zoning, I think there ought to be some enforcement of that. If it was required that he do it, and he didn't do it, how did he get the zoning? The second thing is, this Zoning Ordinance says that you have to have at least 80 acres, or, I believe it says 12, redeveloped. I don't think there's a person in this room, because it certainly hasn't been a person in any of the meetings, that can tell you what was redeveloped on Maybank Highway. I've lived there for over 20 years. I've lived on James Island nearly all my life, and I've never known a structure to be there. The argument is that there was an old house. I don't think the intent of the Gathering Place was to find an old foundation and develop 600 apartments on it under the guise of being redeveloped. Another thing you might want to look at is, not one of the live-work units have been rented. When this first came up, I tried to say, there's an apartment complex just like this in Mount Pleasant that went bankrupt, and the Town of Mount Pleasant, from my understanding, had to undo the zoning because none of the live-work units rented. Well, if you want to see eight or ten empty live-work units, drive down Maybank. People don't do that, particularly, on James Island. Somebody tell me what does the Gathering Place gives you that a PUD doesn't give you? It's kind of like the Gathering Place gives us the wall to hide behind because we can't move further than five feet from the sidewalk, and we have to maximize the density. Well, we're going to have 1,000 units come on line between Albemarle Road and Riverland Terrace, as I understand it. Furthermore-"

The Clerk called time.

Mr. Welch said, "One second. The traffic study that was done before The Standard was built said if The Standard was built, it would receive an F."

The Clerk called time.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. There will be opportunity for public comment to the Committee, as well."

Mr. Welch said, "Thank you, sir."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir."

Matt Doszkocs said, "Matt Doszkocs, 36 Moultrie Street. Now, I've been coming to these meetings, talking to heads of PP&S (Planning, Preservation and Sustainability), petitioning City Hall, and in my neighborhood for more than 16 months now. I've gathered hundreds of signatures already, and it's significant that more than 98 percent of the neighbors who are asked signed in favor of allowing owner-occupied homeshare rentals in North Central. Given the City's long history of these rentals in various forms, the enormous amount of support voiced by members of the community, and current examples being set in Cannonborough and other neighborhoods where they are permitted already, at this point there should be absolutely zero doubt about homesharing works across the City. It is those who are in opposition to this issue who should be forced to come here spending their valuable evenings trying to convince this Council why these rentals shouldn't be allowed. The income these rentals provide is vital for many of the City's vulnerable homeowners, and we simply cannot afford to wait another 16 months for the City to figure this out in detail. Mayor Tecklenburg, please ask City Council to pass an official resolution to suspend the prosecution of homeshare rentals that is based solely on a homeowner renting a room for under 30 days. I can rent 30 days, and I don't have to have any tax, fire, parking, or any requirements. Why 29 days, and, all of a sudden, it's different. Planning staff has already looked at this. In October 2014, they took something to Mayor Riley, and Mayor Riley stopped it for some reason, but this isn't rocket science. They looked at this. They were ready to expand the Bed and Breakfast ordinance to include me in 2014, and I'm still coming here, still spending my time. So, I'm sorry I'm a little frustrated here, as you might understand. If there's a livability issue with these rentals, then have an officer come out, just like with the college kids that throw parties. It seems to me, that's what that court is for, a livability issue, not an under 30-day versus over a 30-day that serves hotels and prevents fair competition from homeowners when, in 1794, we outnumbered them 29-1, and now they outnumber us 24-1. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Yes, sir."

Christopher Inglese said, "Good evening, Mayor Tecklenburg, congratulations. Congratulations, Councilmembers. Christopher Inglese, my office is 1 Wappoo Creek Drive on James Island. You're going to hear more from folks on short-term rentals. I have the privilege of representing, so far, 22 defendants, in what I would characterize as a bizarre lawsuit that has been brought by a citizen hiding behind the name of a trust to sue his neighbors over this, what I call short-term residential use. I want to change the nomenclature to get it out of the short-term rental use, and call it what it is, which is short-term residential use. There really is no distinction, and there are some court cases throughout the Country that have said that there is no distinction, and that it is a purely residential use. I have the honor of representing those 22 defendants. There are 60 named in two lawsuits, so far. My understanding, through the grapevine, is that there's a third lawsuit on the way. These are your constituents, these are neighbors, these are good people. I'll give you three case studies real quick. One is a single mom who inherited her family property. She's not a high wage earner and not highly educated. In order to afford the maintenance and taxes on her historic Charleston house, she has to be able to do this kind of activity, so she can live in it, and afford the maintenance, and afford to raise her children. Another couple, a young professional couple has kids. His job takes him all over the Country for weeks, months on end. This is their home. They don't want to rent it longterm. They want to be able to come home, but they don't want an empty home for months on end. This is a benefit to them to have people utilizing their home in this residential use. The third case study is a College of Charleston student whose parents bought a duplex, and they want to come visit her, and renting it long-term takes away the ability for the parents to come stay on the same property. These are reasonable people, upstanding citizens now being sued guy who thinks he is entitled to a monopoly on this use in the Cannonborough/Elliotborough neighborhood. Finally, let me leave you with this statistic because it is kind of important. We're aware of the concern. I was hired to write an ordinance. I've written the ordinance. We've considered all of the concerns of the neighborhoods. If I may conclude in 30 seconds, Mayor Tecklenburg. The work has been done. We have done the work. We've provided the work. We'll continue. You're going to hear from more folks, and we'll be back. We're going to continue to come back. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Yes, sir."

7. Patrick Arnold said, "My name is Patrick Arnold of 25 Beverly Road, and I serve as the Government Affairs Director for the Charleston Trident Association of Realtors (CTAR). I am here as the voice of the real estate industry in the Lowcountry, and I am here to show our association's support for the SCVRMA (South Carolina Vacation Rental Managers Association) and their policy recommendations. CTAR supports the protection of private property rights and opposes the unreasonable or excessive restrictions on private property owners, particularly, in short-term rental properties. Unfortunately, we see the ordinance in place today as that, and we believe it's simply based on fear rather than a true understanding of the short-term market or how it's growing. Our local and national associations have done extensive legal analysis of the recommendations that Chris (Inglese) mentioned he was helping write, and we believe them to be fair both to the property owners and the community at large. Those are the reasons we, as an association, urge you, the members of Council, to implement the recommendations from the SCVRMA in the spirit of private property rights. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Yes, ma'am."

8. Ginger Scofield said, "Hi, my name is Ginger Scofield. Excuse me. I'm not a speaker. I'm here to speak on behalf of my support for short-term rentals here in Charleston. After graduating from the College of Charleston in 2004 with a business degree and a

concentration in Hospitality and Tourism. I purchased my first home in Dorchester County at the peak of the market. In 2009, I owed more than what it was worth. I was not making any headway and trying to make ends meet to pay my student loans, monthly bills, while maintaining a reliable car to get me to and from work. I had experience in property management and heard about Airbnb from a friend of mine. Just to give it a shot, I listed my home and realized shortly after meeting people from all over the world and providing accommodations, this was something that I was made to do. Not only that, but I began putting extra money towards paying off my student loans, purchasing a more reliable car and getting out from owing more than what my home was worth. Short-term rentals are used for more than just vacation. I've served a broad variety of guests, including families remodeling their homes after flooding or damage, business people staying for more than a few days, patients and their families in town for extended medical visits at MUSC and other surrounding hospitals, families visiting family in the area for the holidays, families and groups attending weddings, families visiting their first grandchild, one family coming from the US to receive their surrogate baby, as well as families visiting to put their loved one to rest. Quite a few of my neighbors, in my neighborhood alone, have had their families stay in my home. I love making people feel at home and welcoming them, no matter what the circumstance for which they're visiting. Speaking of my neighbors, all of my neighbors have my phone number, and I have theirs. I make it clear to them that I'm always available, should any of my quests cause disruption of any sort. I also let my quests know that my neighbors have my number and they will call me should anything look or sound out of the ordinary. I have not received but a single phone call since September 2010 when I started renting. I've always dreamed of working for myself while making a difference in people's lives. Because of my amazing experiences with short-term quests, I believe that this may be a reality for me one day, and I feel empowered as a single young female to know that working for myself might be a reality one day."

The Clerk called time.

Ms. Scofield said, "Okay."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Time. Thank you very much. Yes, ma'am."

Roshonda Grant, "Roshonda Grant, 618 Fleming Road, 29412. Welcome, Mayor Tecklenburg, congratulations. City Councilmen and woman, I, like Ginger, like Matt, like so many other folks who came before me, am here to speak out on behalf or to advocate for shortterm rentals. Two years ago, after establishing a very good career in non-profit and community service in Tallahassee, Florida, I returned to my home of Charleston, South Carolina, so that I could continue my work in the community. I have been very pleased to maintain a position with the United Way where I am able to help citizens who are disenfranchised to maintain and gain access to the resources that they need. Every day I get up and go to work, and I help citizens of Charleston, Dorchester and Berkeley Counties. Like so many of you, I am here solely to serve my community. That is the only reason why I returned to Charleston, but, unfortunately, I can't afford to do that on the salary that I make in nonprofit. The funds just aren't there and Charleston is an exorbitant place to live. While we're having conversations about affordable housing, student loan debt crisis and all these other issues that affect me as a young child of Charleston, the only solution that I have found is short-term renting the home that I inherited from my grandparent, that he inherited from his grandparent, and that is what allows me to make ends meet. That is the only thing that allowed me to fix my water pump when it broke this morning on my way to work. That is why I am so frazzled here today. That is the only thing that allows me to continue working for a nonprofit to sit on the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Longterm Recovery Committee, where I now am trying to help so many of our citizens who are

devastated by this flood to regain some sort of stability. That is the only way that I am able to continue my work in preserving the Gullah Geechee culture and community that I love so much here in Charleston because I am financially able to do so. Short-term renters aren't large investment companies coming from out of town to take over our neighborhoods. These are not investors from out of town. These are not conglomerates. They are people, like me, Ginger, and Matt who own our homes, love our homes and love this City. We only want the opportunity to share that with others. Thank you so much for your time."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Yes, sir."

There was applause in the Chamber.

10. David Marvel said, "Mayor Tecklenburg, congratulations, and City Council. I'm David Marvel, 16 N. Enston Avenue in North Central, 29403. Like Mr. Inglese, I represent several defendants in the short-term rental lawsuits that have been filed by the Global Family Real Property Trust. I believe that's what it's called as the main plaintiff. I'd like to implore the City to stand behind the defendants in this action. I think the clear, overwhelming majority and sentiment of the Wagener Terrace neighborhood and the North Central neighborhood is in favor of residential short-term rental use in those areas. This lawsuit was brought with a gravamen that this Trust could enforce the City's ordinances against those that it saw as violating those ordinances under the theory of a public nuisance. I think for the City to allow a trust or a private citizen to engage those ordinances in a fashion in which it is hurting the vast majority of the sentiment of the City, would be a great an injustice. We would implore the City to actually appear in that action and take a position on behalf of the short-term rental defendants. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much, Yes, ma'am."

11. Ann Marie Bowden, said, "Hi, my name is Ann Marie Bowden, and I live at 229 Grove Street. I'm here, just like everyone who has spoken before me, in support of short-term rentals. I am a single mother of two children, and, after my divorce several years ago, maintaining my home became very difficult. Having short-term rentals has allowed me to be able to maintain my home, take care of my children, be able to pick my children up from school every day, be the mother that I want to be and be there for them. I just want you to think about this issue, and, hopefully, we can make short-term rentals legal in the City."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you so much."

Ms. Bowden said, "Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir."

12. Sid Boone said, "Mayor Tecklenburg, members of Council, I'm Sid Boone, McNair Law Firm, 100 Calhoun Street. I'm speaking regarding agenda Item L-1, bills up for first reading, pertaining to 595 and 601 King Street and 32 and 34 Spring Street. The Planning Commission recommended that 34 Spring Street, which is a very small portion of the property involved, be added to the Accommodations Overlay zone, and that all four properties be zoned MU-2 Workforce Housing. The Planning Commission did not recommend approval of rezoning from 55/30 Height District to 80/30 Height District. I am here to urge Council to grant the height district rezoning, as well as the other rezoning request. My client has a contract to purchase this property, which is a vacant lot. The additional height is requested to allow ceiling heights on

a five-story building, so that it can be greater than would be allowed under 55/30. The building would not exceed five stories. Spring Street is evolving, and this is an important corner that needs to be developed for upper King Street. With the advent of making Spring Street a two-way street, I think you will see more foot traffic and further improvements to property on Spring Street. Construction on this important corner will bring jobs and tax base for this district. We understand the City anticipates even higher heights on the adjoining property to the north. However, my clients do not need that additional height. It needs to move forward under its contract. Therefore, I encourage you to vote for these three rezoning requests separately and support all three. Thank you very much."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, sir. Yes, sir."

Patterson Smith said, "Mayor, members of City Council. I'm Patterson Smith, a citizen of Charleston, and also Patterson Smith of Patterson Smith Company, a commercial realtor since 1976 right here in Charleston. I'm representing Linda Banov Stern in the sale of the property that Mr. Boone just talked about, but I wear more than one hat. Many of you may know me from my work in CARTA for many years. I was Chairman of the Board. I actually was the Chairman when CARTA was founded, so, I think I understand a little bit about public transit. I think I understand a little bit about density and how density helps to drive successful public transit, but I've also been involved on Upper King Street. I own a building at the corner of King and John Street purchased in 1988, some 28 years ago. I'm very proud of that building. I engaged the City soon after I purchased the building and became Chairman of the Upper King Street Revitalization Committee. We worked very hard to try to address some of the ills of Upper King Street. Upper King Street, at that point in time, was an area of town that most people in my business would tell new people who were coming into the community, 'you don't want to go north of Calhoun Street. There's nothing worthwhile north of Calhoun Street'. Now, I can tell you I worked very hard, the City worked very hard, and I know that Council worked very hard to change that around. We're very proud of what Upper King Street has become. The project that is suggested here, I think, is the culmination of the excellence that we have tried to have on Upper King Street. The developer tells me that he can build a size building that he wants under the current height limitation. Well, I don't believe that would be the building that I want. I don't believe that it would be the building of excellence. He tells me that if we could go to 70 feet, the ordinance says 80, that he can have heights in the corridors, in the rooms, and all of that, that would make for a much grander building. I hope that he'll be able to afford, as well, much finer materials. I hope that we'll wind up seeing a building that truly is the culmination of what I had hoped and what I know the City has hoped will be Upper King Street. I urge you to support the applicant's request under Section L, which will be to allow the MU zoning, the one lot, and this seems to be a technical problem, needs to be included in the dash A, and the third thing is the 80/30 height limitation. Thank you so much for your time."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you sir. Yes, sir."

14. Richard Gowe said, "Mayor Tecklenburg, Council, thank you for hearing me. I am the third leg of this triumvirate here, and I have pictures."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Please introduce yourself."

Mr. Gowe said, "I'm Richard Gowe with LS3P."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you."

Mr. Gowe continued, "This is a diagram showing the lot that would be added to Accommodations. The entire parcel is already in the Accommodations. The hotel in a hospitable place, entering into this new district near a neighborhood, is in excellent use. It's eyes on the street, 24/7. The MU for this area would allow units. Along with those residential units, we would be required to do Workforce Housing, which typically is an 80 to 120 percent AMI (area median income). Our client has agreed to do two, 60 percent AMI units in this development out of the five that are workforce housing required. This is a simple diagram showing the extent of the redevelopment area that the City, at the last public hearing, talked about wanting to step back and rezone on a very major scale. It's 24 acres of redevelopment and thinking. It would take six months or a year. We are in a unique economic cycle. This is a wonderful opportunity, and we need to act now. A future park, which is planned adjacent to the Lowline, would be in this location. There are currently buildings 100 feet tall being planned, phase courier, phase one of the Post and Courier. These are Phases II and III. This is the site. This is the hopeful park that is attempted. This is a diagram showing King Street, the neighborhood and how the building would step back appropriately not only on King Street, but also towards the neighborhood. This would be a height that you wouldn't even see the tallest part of the building. To take a little bit of leeway from the Rabbi who spoke today about having gold on the inside of the box, as well as on the outside, Charleston is a City that you have to design the building well. You have to design the spaces between the building well. Frankly, in order to make the rents and the returns for the property prices, we have to do a wonderful job on the inside. Look at this space. Go to Gaillard. Go to the Customs House. Charleston buildings have grandeur on the inside. There are surprises. That's what makes this City special. We want that opportunity. We would use four stories instead of five at 55 feet. We'd step back. You wouldn't even see the top."

The Clerk called time.

Mr. Gowe said, "Let us build a better building."

Mayor Tecklenburg called time.

Mr. Gowe said, "We're not trying to build more. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, sir. Yes, sir."

Robert Gurley said, "Mayor Tecklenburg, members of City Council, I'm Robert Gurley with the Preservation Society of Charleston. I'm also here to speak about L-1, the first reading about 595 King Street. The Planning Commission voted to deny the increase in height, and I'm here tonight to ask you to support the Planning Commission's decision to deny the height increase. When you go from King and Spring, you're beginning to transition in the neighborhood, and we think that the City was right when they made this a 55 foot district. We think it should be retained as a 55 foot district. My friends who are speaking in favor of the height increase, you're hearing a lot of developer problems. You're hearing a lot about paying for the land. That's really not the public's issue, the price you pay for the land. The public shouldn't have to take the problem and shouldn't be penalized by having a building that the City, in its wisdom, and the Planning Commission, in its wisdom, says it's correct at 55 feet. We also believe that it's correct at 55 feet, and Mr. Gowe's company has done a great new hotel. I find it curious that he thinks that he needs more than 55 feet. The Grand Bohemian on Meeting Street is a very elegant hotel, and that's within that height district, so you can certainly do good development at 55 feet. We think that the City was correct when they made this district 55 feet. We think the Planning Commission was correct when they denied the height increase. We ask

that you support the Planning Commission's decision to deny the height. Also, to the adding of Accommodations District, with the proliferation of hotels here in the City, I think we have to be very careful. The Accommodations District was set after a lot of public discourse. We're very reluctant to see that increased, just to increase space for another hotel. Thank you very much."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you much. Yes, ma'am."

Megan Ladd said, "My name is Megan Ladd, and I live at 155 Grimball Avenue. I am a CofC (College of Charleston) Alum, and I've been here since 1999. I'm here to urge you to support the homesharing community, Airbnb, and VRBO (Vacation Rental by Owner). According to price economics, in many ways, a collaborative consumption economy is a much more optimistic version of the world. It requires trust between strangers, trust to be a safe homeowner, trust to be a good neighbor, and trust to be a good quest. So far as evidenced by the growth of companies by Airbnb and VRBO, that trust is working out well. We bought a property in Riverland Terrace that, according to records and our neighbors, was basically run by a slumlord cramming three separate renters, letting the backyard be overgrown, termites that weren't addressed and an overall neglect of the home and property. We spent a year and a quite bit of money renovating the home, landscaped, put a pool in, a dream of my mother's, and a basic overhaul of the property to where we dreamed a home for my parents to come visit five times a year and retire eventually. I would like to mention that I am a full-time resident on this property. In order to make this dream come true, we've rented this home out, when it's not being used, through Airbnb. If we were to rent the home out long-term, there's no saying that the renters will be perfect, nor will my family be able to scoot down here on a whim. At least with Airbnb, they're vetted, short-term and almost always families, and, at least, if they're terrible, which they never have been, they will be required to leave. This is our home. It is one that we extend to make ends meet for the future of my family. I urge you to respect and allow the homesharing community to exist. We are a part of your community. These are our homes, and I have an issue with why this is even a problem. Thank you for your time."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Would anyone else like to be heard?

No one else came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "If not, that's the end of our public participation period for this Council meeting. Given the preponderance of comments on a couple of topics, I'd like to address just a couple of them, one of which is the issue of the short-term rentals. In fact, Councilmember Lewis, at our last meeting, suggested that we study this issue and that we come back to Council with a new ordinance regarding this issue. I would like to appoint a committee or commission, similar to the one that we have studying the Gathering Place, with both Councilmembers and members of the public, citizens, to review our existing ordinance and what should be done. Are there any volunteers here?"

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Just a point for clarification."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Gregorie.

Councilmember Gregorie said, "It was my understanding that it was supposed to go to Community Development. At the last meeting, it was recommended that the issue be sent to the Community Development Committee, if we're going to do something different. It's my

understanding that the issue comes to the Community Development Committee, the Community Development Committee then studies it, and then makes a recommendation to the full body. If we're going to create another committee, I'm not quite sure how that will work."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We need a vehicle in which there is an assured public participation, and it's something we'll do over the next couple of weeks. I'll meet with you, Councilmember Gregorie, and we can discuss which way to go."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "I serve on Community Development."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "And Councilmember Mitchell."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Lewis.

Councilmember Lewis said, "Mr. Mayor, I'd just like to say thank you. I thought this issue only started in my district when one gentleman got arrested for violating short-term rental. That's why I asked you. It makes it seem that I started this stuff. He was constantly on me. I had to call Deputy Chief Elder yesterday because this gentleman threatened me. So, I hope that we will take this matter up. If the City wants it, the City approves it. If it still is illegal in the eyes of the City, make it illegal, but we just need to address this issue."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir. I'll bring it up. I know folks are passionate about the issue and have been maybe waiting a while and want something quickly, but we will take this matter up soon. Secondly, I think I can speak for my Council and speak for this City government and administration, that it is our express purpose and policy to eliminate racism and to disavow discrimination of any kind based on race, based on sex, based on religion or the lack thereof, sexual orientation, place of origin, just about anything you can think of. We do have our public participation period, and I outlined to you the rules that this Council has passed. We expect our participants to address matters that involve City business. We don't want to dampen First Amendment rights, but there are other venues where folks can express their opinions. I mentioned the subjective analysis or definition of what abusive is, but my interpretation as Mayor and leader of this Council would be that any discriminatory remarks, racist remarks, are abusive and out of order. With that being said, I think we did the Committee on Traffic and Transportation Report, and we go to the Committee on Public Works and Utilities next."

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. You'll see on the agenda two items for Acceptance and Dedication of Right-of-Way and Easements. Item 2a, Sea Island Farms and Item 2b, Daniel Island Parcel BB Phase I. I ask for and recommend approval."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Is there any discussion?"

Councilmember Waring said, "Mr. Mayor, there was an area of discussion that I just would like to share with Council, and that was an instruction to staff. It will be coming back some time, where some of the old shopping centers do not have stormwater drainage to study that and come back with a program, because a lot of these shopping centers' drainage actually run through neighborhoods, to bring them in compliance. If a shopping center is built today, or an office park is built today, you have to manage your own water on your own site prior to it entering the public drainage system. With the revitalization going on, that needs to be part of it. So, we will be coming back with information to this Council at a later date once the staff gets back to us, but we had a hearty discussion on that today. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Riegel.

Councilmember Riegel said, "I thank you. I applaud Councilmember Waring for his leadership on that. He and I talked about that several times, and I do commend you for that. Quick easy question, only because it affected my district so evidently, the flooding, I was interested in the City of Charleston's response to our meeting some weeks ago. Our constituents and the participants in that meeting of over 200 people, did expect some correspondence and some communication back to them, which has not happened. In defense, I will also say that the County has not responded in any way, shape, or form to those some 200 people in attendance. A County Councilmember actually lives in one of the heavily, heavily afflicted neighborhoods, Hickory Farms. So, I would just ask that the administration or maybe Public Works look to maybe put that a little higher on the agenda to respond and react to those folks, and I'd certainly appreciate that. I know Councilmember Waring shares my feelings, but I think we need to communicate something to those constituents who suffered so much, Mr. Mayor, and thank you for your hard work, Chairman Waring."

On a motion of Councilmember Waring, seconded by Councilmember Williams, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the Committee on Public Works and Utilities as presented:

---INSERT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES REPORT---

(Acceptance and Dedication of Rights-of-Way and Easements

- a. Sea Island Farms acceptance and dedication of Sea Island Road (50-foot right-of-way), Thoroughbred Boulevard (50-foot right-of-way), and Grants Passage (50-foot right-of-way).
- b. Daniel Island Parcel BB Phase I acceptance and dedication of Judge Johnson Lane (20-foot right-of-way), Canecutter Lane (20-foot right-of-way), a portion of Oak Leaf Street (right-of-way width varies), a portion of Josiah Street (50-foot right-of-way), a portion of Willtown Street (50-foot right-of-way), and a portion of Village Crossing (66-foot right-of-way).

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next is the report on the License Committee."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Mayor Tecklenburg and Councilmembers, the License Committee met today, and we recommend approval of the amendments contained in Item 3 for the Licensing Committee."

The Clerk said, "Is that a motion?"

On a motion of Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the report of the License Committee as presented:

---INSERT LICENSE COMMITTEE REPORT---

(i) An ordinance to amend the Business License Ordinance for the City of Charleston to change the due date for the payment of the City's Business License Fee from January 31st to February 19th, and to change the penalty dates to coincide with the amended due date.

First reading was given to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend the Business License Ordinance for the City of Charleston to change the due date for the payment of the City's Business License Fee from January 31st to February 19th, and to change the penalty dates to coincide with the amended due date.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next is a report from the Committee on Ways and Means."

On a motion of Councilmember Riegel, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the report of the Committee on Ways and Means.

--- INSERT WAYS AND MEANS REPORT---

(Bids and Purchases

- (Police Department: Approval to submit the FFY2017 SC Department of Public Safety Grant in the amount of \$231,998 to fund and outfit 2 new traffic officers for the Traffic Enforcement Team. No City match is required.
- (Fire Department: Approval to submit a FEMA grant application in the amount of \$860,682 to purchase a heavy rescue vehicle. Due to time constraints, this grant was submitted on January 15, 2016. A City match in the amount of \$86,068 will be budgeted in 2017.
- (Office of Cultural Affairs: Approval to submit a grant application to Arts Midwest Big Read in the amount of \$10,000 for the 2016 MOJA Arts Festival. A City match in the amount of \$10,000 is required. The match will come from paid admissions, SCAC grant aid, and foundation grants.
- (Police Department: Approve an extension to the Agreement between Bayside Apartments, L.P. and the Charleston Police Department which allows the Police Department to provide patrol services and a liaison officer to the property.
- (Traffic and Transportation: Approve a Resolution between the South Carolina Department of Transportation and the City of Charleston for Clements Ferry Road Advance Clearing and Resurfacing Project
- (Request approval of the Resolution granting the Mayor discretion not to terminate the Purchase and Sale Agreement dated December 15, 2015, between the City of Charleston and 99 WestEdge Developer, LLC (TMS: a portion of 460-00-00-013; 99 WestEdge) [Councilmember Lewis voted nay.]
- (Request approval of the Resolution expressing the City's intention to reimburse from the first available TIF bond proceeds both the City and MUSC for any costs incurred on account of either party's agreement to guaranty certain costs for public improvements supporting WestEdge relating to the infrastructure payment required in the Purchase and Sale Agreement dated December 15, 2015 for the sale of a portion of 180 Lockwood [TMS: a portion of 460-00-00-013; Horizon Redevelopment Project Area (the "TIF District"), 99 WestEdge] [Councilmember Lewis voted nay.]
- (Authorize Mayor to execute the attached Lease Amendment between the City (Landlord) and Member II, Inc. (Tenant) whereby the City agrees to allow Tenant, as part of a restaurant kitchen improvement project, to install an above ground grease trap and a vent-less hood with a fire suppression system. (TMS: 459-09-03-147; Ann Street Visitor's Center Parking Garage Retail Space) [Ordinance]

First reading was given to the following resolutions and bill:

Resolution between the South Carolina Department of Transportation and the City of

Charleston for Clements Ferry Road Advance Clearing and Resurfacing Project

Resolution granting the Mayor discretion not to terminate the Purchase and Sale Agreement dated December 15, 2015, between the City of Charleston and 99 WestEdge Developer, LLC

Resolution expressing the City's intention to reimburse from the first available TIF bond proceeds both the City and MUSC for any costs incurred on account of either party's agreement to guaranty certain costs for public improvements supporting WestEdge relating to the infrastructure payment required in the Purchase and Sale Agreement dated December 15, 2015 for the sale of a portion of 180 Lockwood

An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to execute on behalf of the City an Amendment to the Lease Agreement dated April 16, 1996 originally between the City and Ann Street Associates, L.L.C., subsequently assigned to Member II, Inc., pertaining to approximately 8,640 square feet of space located in an area commonly known as the visitor's reception and transportation center.

The Clerk said, "Mayor, I might just say for the public that that would include all the resolutions and ordinances that are attached."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Absolutely. Now, bills up for second reading."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Items K-1 through K-6, moved for approval."

The Clerk said, "Actually, Item K-2 is deferred. K-1, then K-3 through K-6."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We can take Items K-1, K-3, K-4, K-5 and K-6 together without any objections."

On a motion of Councilmember Mitchell, five (5) bills (Item K-1 and Items K-3 through K-6) received second reading. They passed second reading on motion of Councilmember Gregorie and third reading on motion of Councilmember Gregorie. On further motion of Councilmember Mitchell, the rules were suspended and the bills were immediately ratified as:

2016-015

AN ORDINANCE TO AFFIRM SEC. 2-28 AND SEC. 2-36 THROUGH SEC. 2-72 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON AS THE RULES OF ORDER AND PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND AS THE PROCEDURES FOR THE ENACTMENT OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS.

2016-016

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO CLOSE AND ABANDON A PORTION OF NORMAN STREET IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF CHARLESTON, STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, RUNNING GENERALLY IN A NORTHERLY DIRECTION FROM THE NORTHERN CORNER OF TMS #463-16-04-027 TO ITS TERMINUS AS DEFINED BY POINTS K,G,F,L,M,N,O,P,K AS SHOWN ON A PLAT ENTITLED "PLAT SHOWING THE CREATION OF A NEW SUBSURFACE UTILITY EASEMENT & A NEW UTILITY

EASEMENT FOR AN EXISTING LIGHT POLE FOR THE CITY OF CHARLESTON AND ALSO SHOWING A PORTION OF NORMAN STREET CURRENTLY MAINTAINED BY THE CITY OF CHARLESTON TO BE CONVEYED BY THE CITY OF CHARLESTON TO CROSSTOWN DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, LLC", SAID PLAT BEING MORE FULLY SHOWN ON EXHIBIT A, ATTACHED HERETO AND INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE HEREIN, SUBJECT TO THE CITY OF CHARLESTON AND CPW HAVING OVERLAPPING, SEPARATE, NON-EXCLUSIVE UTILITY EASEMENTS OVER THE ENTIRETY OF THE PORTION OF NORMAN STREET BEING CLOSED, ABANDONED AND CONVEYED CROSSTOWN DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS. ACCORDANCE WITH THIS ORDINANCE; AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO CONVEY THAT PORTION OF NORMAN STREET CLOSED AND ABANDONED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS ORDINANCE TO CROSSTOWN DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, LLC. (AS AMENDED)

2016-017

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE ON BEHALF OF THE CITY A FIRST AMENDMENT TO PARKING AGREEMENT PERTAINING TO A PARKING AGREEMENT FOR SPACES AT THE AQUARIUM GARAGE, SAID AGREEMENT BEING DATED JULY 21, 1998, ORIGINALLY BETWEEN THE CITY AND RIVERS ENTERPRISES, INC., CHARLESTON GATEWAY CENTER, LLC AND JOHN M. RIVERS, JR., SAID AGREEMENT SUBSEQUENTLY BEING ASSIGNED IN PART TO MAZYCK HOLDINGS, LLC. (AS AMENDED)

2016-018

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE ON BEHALF OF THE CITY A FIRST AMENDMENT TO PARKING AGREEMENT PERTAINING TO A PARKING AGREEMENT FOR SPACES AT THE GAILLARD COMPLEX, SAID AGREEMENT BEING DATED JULY 20, 1999, ORIGINALLY BETWEEN THE CITY AND RIVERS ENTERPRISES, INC., CHARLESTON GATEWAY CENTER, LLC AND JOHN M. RIVERS, JR., SAID AGREEMENT SUBSEQUENTLY BEING ASSIGNED IN PART TO MAZYCK HOLDINGS, LLC AND COLLATERALLY ASSIGNED TO TRANSAMERICA FINANCIAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, AS LENDER. (AS AMENDED)

2016-019

AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE ANNEXATION OF PROPERTY KNOWN AS 2116 SAINT JAMES DRIVE (0.24 ACRE) (TMS# 343-02-00-073), JAMES ISLAND, CHARLESTON COUNTY, TO THE CITY OF CHARLESTON, SHOWN WITHIN THE AREA ANNEXED UPON A MAP ATTACHED HERETO AND MAKE IT PART OF DISTRICT 11.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Now, we can go to bills up for first reading. This is in regard to property that we've heard about this evening."

Councilmember Riegel made a motion to approve.

Councilmember Moody seconded the motion.

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Mitchell.

Councilmember Mitchell said, "On bills coming up, for Item L-1, I was going to move for approval, but someone jumped the gun. Anyway, I'm going to make the motion that we approve all the different zoning, the lot, the accommodation for L-1. The Planning Commission denied it, and the way they have it, a ¾ vote is needed to approve it. I'm going to override the Planning Commission. I want to vote for approval for all the entities on that particular one."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We had a motion on the floor already to approve the bill as written, which would have included the disallowance of the height district. So, we would need an amendment to that motion. Am I correct?"

Councilmember Riegel said, "I would agree to the amendment, I'm not sure what ..."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Who originally made the motion?"

The Clerk said, "The original motion was made by Councilmember Riegel and seconded by Councilmember Moody."

Councilmember Riegel said, "That's correct."

Councilmember Moody said, "That's with the elevated height."

Councilmember Waring said, "Mr. Mayor, point of order. I just want to get clarification on what is to be considered."

The Clerk said, "So, Councilmember Moody, are you saying including the height district, which was not the Planning Commission's recommendation?

Councilmember Moody said, "Yes."

The Clerk said, "That would be what Councilmember Mitchell is asking."

Councilmember Riegel said, "It's the same thing. We'll just need a ¾ vote to override it. It's pretty simple."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I was just trying to get my parliamentary procedure right. So, we have a motion, and it was amended to override the Planning Commission's portion regarding the height district. Does that sound right?"

The Clerk said, "Yes."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Now, is there any discussion?"

The Clerk said, "Let's have a show of hands for this vote."

On a motion of Councilmember Riegel, seconded by Councilmember Moody, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following bill and approve the rezoning to 80/30 Old City Height District.

An ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Charleston by changing the Zone Map, which is a part thereof, so that 595 & 601 King Street & 32 & 34 Spring Street (Cannonborough-Elliottborough - Peninsula) (0.60 acre) (TMS #460-08-02-018, 019, 020 & 022) (Council District 4), be rezoned from General Business (GB) classification to Mixed-Use/Workforce Housing (MU-2/WH) classification and to be rezoned from the 55/30 Old City Height District classification and to include 34 Spring Street (TMS #460-08-02-022) in the Accommodations Overlay Zone (A-1) classification. (The Planning Commission recommended denial for the rezoning from the 55/30 Old City District to the 80/30 Old City Height District; requires 3/4 vote of Council.) City Council voted in favor.

The Clerk said, "It's a unanimous vote. All hands are raised."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Waring.

Councilmember Waring said, "I actually want to address the 75 percent rule of overriding the Planning Commission. That's the only place in governance that I'm familiar with that, so maybe we can get our legal counsel to come up here. To override the President of the United States, it takes 2/3 of the majority of Congress. To override the Governor of this State, it takes 2/3. To override the Heritage Act to bring down the Confederate flag, it took 2/3 of our General Assembly, but to override the Planning Commission, it takes 75 percent of an elected body, and we appoint them. I think that needs to be revisited at the very least to 2/3 or a simple majority, but certainly not 75 percent. While we're in the motion, if we can hear from our legal counsel."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Corporate Counsel Cantwell."

Frances Cantwell said, "Thank you, Councilmember Waring. As a matter of fact, the Mayor has broached this issue with staff already, and we will be getting together as a staff and coming up with a recommendation that would modify that requirement for ¾ vote. Obviously, we would love some direction from Council, if you want to keep somewhat of a super majority, we could do that. There are a number of ways to do it by super majority of those present as opposed to the entire body. We could have just a simple majority. I think what staff will do is, we'll discuss that, make a recommendation and bring it back through the pipeline, through the Planning Commission, and then up to you."

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for acting on that so quickly. With that, I withdraw my motion, if that's fine with the body."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Is that the pleasure of Council?"

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Moody.

Councilmember Moody said, "Just a verification of what Ms. Cantwell said. We're talking about 2/3 or some sense that you want to direct that to 2/3 of those present, or 2/3 of Council? I suggest 2/3 of those present."

Councilmember Waring said, "I would support that as well."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I think we plan to come back to you with a recommendation that may be even more generous than that."

Councilmember Moody said, "My sense is that we need to have more than a simple majority, because those folks have gone through a lot to get there. Sometimes maybe you don't have all the information, but I still think ¾ is way too much."

Councilmember Waring said, "I appreciate your comments, and I think, with counsel and Mr. Mayor, when they vet it and bring it back to us, I don't think we'll see 75 percent again. I have full faith and confidence in that."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Just another point of information regarding that height district. We do expect that report back from John Olschuler, I think, this week or next week. At the last Council meeting, we said it would be here soon. It will be, and before we make any other modification, I, respectfully, ask that we allow study and process to come to the Council for your consideration. That's regarding the height of the properties around the U-Haul properties similar to around Marion Square and consider what's appropriate long-term for not just that one property, but the whole neighborhood. So, is there any further business? If none, the next regular meeting will be February 9th right here at City Hall. We will, for those who don't have other plans this evening, have our State of the City Address at 7:30 this evening, so come back shortly if you'd like to attend. Otherwise, this meeting of City Council is adjourned."

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Vanessa Turner Maybank Clerk of Council The following State of the City Address was prepared for delivery by Mayor John J. Tecklenburg on January 26, 2016, at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Mayor Pro Tem, members of City Council, honored guests and fellow Charlestonians:

Fifteen days ago, I had the extraordinary honor of being sworn in as our city's 61st mayor. On that day, I spoke in general terms about the vision our citizens endorsed last November -- a vision of Charleston as a city of opportunity, where every individual has a real chance to succeed, and our residents' quality of life always comes first. Tonight, I'd like to talk to you in more detail about our plan to make that vision a reality -- and about the work our city is already doing to further those priorities.

But first, I want to take a moment to recognize my colleagues in city leadership -the outstanding members of our City Council, who serve the citizens of Charleston
with such diligence and distinction. These are the people who give of their time
and energy to ensure that every area, every neighborhood, of our city receives
the representation it deserves. These are the people whose hard work has

contributed so much to the many successes our city has enjoyed in recent years.

These are your friends and neighbors -- and my valued colleagues.

So, now, I would ask each member to stand as I call out their name, and to remain standing until all have been recognized.

District One Councilmember Gary White-- District Two Councilmember Rodney
Williams -- District Three Councilmember James Lewis -- District Four
Councilmember Robert Mitchell -- District Five Councilmember Marvin Wagner -District Six Councilmember Dudley Gregorie -- District Seven Councilmember
Keith Waring -- District Eight Councilmember Mike Seekings -- My fellow
newcomer to this chamber, District Nine Councilmember Peter Shahid, Jr. -District Ten Councilmember Dean Riegel -- District Eleven Councilmember Bill
Moody, Jr. -- And District Twelve Councilmember Kathleen Wilson.

Fellow citizens, these are my partners on the Charleston leadership team, and I'd like to ask you all to now join me in recognizing their many accomplishments -- and in thanking them for their service.

Thank you all, and please be seated.

As I said two weeks ago, this is a moment rich with the promise of a better, brighter future for all our citizens. We need only the will, and the wisdom, to work together to claim it. And already, it's clear that we as a city are coming together around a plan that will do just that -- a practical, comprehensive quality-of-life plan that will help us ensure that Charleston is not just the best city in America to visit, but also the best city in America to live, work, worship and raise a family.

To do this, we must take action in five major areas – citywide livability, transportation and public transit, the economy, jobs and housing, more responsive city services, and specific initiatives to improve each and every area of our city – from West Ashley to the Peninsula, and from Daniel Island to James and Johns Islands.

And the place we start in terms of citywide livability is with the first job of government -- public safety.

In recent months, our police chief, Greg Mullen has introduced a whole series of initiatives that will make our citizens safer -- and our community more united.

First among these is the Illumination Project, an innovative, year-long effort to break down the barriers between our police and the community they serve, and to build lasting relationships based on trust and mutual respect. Funded by the city, the police fund and private donations, this project is seen as a groundbreaking initiative, and a model for cities around the country. Along these same lines, the CPD has also launched a Community Outreach Unit, and is now testing a new citation and release pilot program, designed to reduce the number of citizens incarcerated for minor offenses.

In addition to its community-building efforts, our police department has also made great strides in using technology to help keep our citizens safe, with a new, state-of-the-art Crime Information Operations Center, and more than 170 body cameras already deployed and more on the way.

Along with Chief Mullen, our fire chief, Karen Brack, has also been working hard to keep our citizens safe, and to ensure that our fire department continues to be woven deeply into the fabric of our community. In keeping with those goals,

providing robust emergency response to the Upper Cainhoy Peninsula will be one of our principle priorities in 2016. To that end, Chief Brack plans first to open a temporary station in the Cainhoy area, soon followed by the acquisition of a suitable property for the development of a permanent fire station to serve the area. We will also break ground this year on new fire stations in West Ashley, which will help improve service in the Savannah Highway, Bees Ferry Road and Glenn McConnell Parkway area.

Along with these new stations, our fire department is launching two new operations initiatives this year: a community paramedic program that will place two to four "quick response" vehicles in strategic locations to enhance service for some of our most vulnerable citizens, and a back to basics program that will ensure we are using current best practices in the areas of fire suppression and rescue procedures.

After public safety, our second major priority in the area of city-wide livability improvements will be flooding and drainage relief.

Currently, we have funding in place for several existing drainage projects, including final completion of the Market Street drainage tunnel, as well as Phase 2 of the Septima Clark Parkway area drainage improvements. The city has also begun work on the early stages of major projects in the areas around West Oak Forest, the St. Andrews Shopping Center, Citadel Mall, Orleans Rd. and West Calhoun Street – and will continue to work directly with citizens in and around Shadowmoss until real solutions to their problems have been found. In addition to these projects, we will begin work this year on review and expansion of the City's just-released sea-level rise plan, which will be the foundation of our strategy to mitigate the effects of sea level rise, now and in the years ahead.

Our next livability priority is a comprehensive, citywide zoning review, with the clearly stated purpose of bringing properties into conformance with the city's already-passed comprehensive plan, and protecting our neighborhoods from irresponsible overdevelopment.

Separate from this zoning review, but on a related matter, I'm happy to report tonight that our City Council's efforts to bring citizens and the business community together to reform our city's Gathering Place ordinance appear to be

bearing real fruit. Several productive meetings among the stakeholders have now been held, and we hope to have a new, more workable, more neighborhood-friendly ordinance before this Council at a date not far in the future.

Our fourth citywide livability priority is protecting the natural environment we all share and enjoy. To that end, we will continue our efforts to preserve and expand greenspace throughout the city, such as our current plan to develop the Lowline -- a remarkable project that will convert an abandoned rail line into a linear park connecting several upper Peninsula neighborhoods that citizens from all over the area will use and enjoy. We will also work to implement the portions of the city's Green Plan that have already been approved by City Council, encourage the retrofitting of older buildings to promote conservation and improve energy performance, and maintain our opposition to oil and natural gas exploration and drilling off our coast.

Finally, with regard to improving general livability, it's time for us to ensure that the cultural arts are accessible to citizens throughout our city. And to do that, we will be working with city officials and the private sector to identify affordable space for local arts organizations, partnering with city schools to offer more arts

programs at all age levels, and expanding our current efforts to spread arts and cultural programs such as Piccolo Spoleto and the MOJA Arts Festival to more areas and schools, so that all of our citizens can attend and participate.

Our second major area of focus in our quality of life initiative is transportation and public transit, starting with the single most critical infrastructure challenge currently facing our city – the completion of I-526.

That is why I am tonight calling on our state and regional leaders to come together to save this vital initiative. This is not just another local road project, as some outside our area have mistakenly suggested. It is critical to the future growth of our entire state -- with tourism, the aviation industry and our remarkable Port of Charleston all dependent on the efficient movement of people and products from one end of our county to the other. Put simply, if this critical project is lost, the residents of West Ashley will not be the only victims. Our whole state's economy will suffer -- and we will all soon find ourselves asking why the next Boeing or the next Volvo decided not to call our beautiful state of South Carolina home.

But I-526, as important as it is, will not alone solve our traffic and transportation challenges. For that, we are going to need a comprehensive regional transportation and public transit plan. And the good news is that that process is starting to come together. By working with our citizens and regional partners, we've already seen real progress on several major fronts, from the re-think of Folly Road, to the widening of Clements Ferry, to the I-26 Alt study, which recently recommended a bus rapid transit system from Summerville to Charleston. This kind of close collaboration between and among citizens and jurisdictions is going to be key to solving our traffic problems in the years ahead—and we as a city are committed to doing our part to make it work.

In addition to these road and public transit initiatives, our transportation plan includes two other important elements.

First, we will begin to make our city more walkable and more bikeable, with light-infrastructure improvements such as striping, signals and signage, the creation of a major North-South bike corridor on the Peninsula, the development of a safe way of getting from West Ashley to Downtown, and a full scale bike sharing system of the kind that has worked so well in other places. In addition to these

improvements, we will also improve safety on our streets by enforcing the existing rules of the road on motorists, bicyclers and pedestrians alike.

And second, we will begin a major reevaluation of our city's parking policies, with a move toward unsubsidized parking rates for our city's visitors, the creation of "park and ride" opportunities outside the city center, an expansion of parking opportunities for neighborhood residents, and discounts for non-Peninsula citizens who come Downtown to work, worship, shop or play.

The next major area of focus in our plan is on economy, jobs and housing -- for without real economic opportunity, the quality of life we want for all our fellow Charlestonians will be out of reach for too many of our citizens.

That's why we begin with strategic economic development, with a particular focus on West Ashley revitalization, the creation and retention of creative, knowledge-based and value-added jobs, the deployment of a full-time city staffer to connect people with the jobs that are coming open, and the continuation of our efforts to encourage headquarters and office relocations to the city.

But all those efforts could prove useless if our citizens are unprepared for the jobs we are bringing into the area. For that reason, we will also work directly with the school district to offer our students more vocational and training opportunities, more mentoring programs, more recreational and after school programs, and more summer jobs for teens, particularly those most in need. In addition, we will also expand our partnerships with private employers to ensure that our workforce is trained and ready for available job opportunities.

We also know, however, that the single greatest way to expand opportunity is by expanding and nurturing our local and small businesses. And to that end, we will continue to develop our city's already successful incubator program, with the Flagship 3 incubator able to begin construction this year – promising more space for entrepreneurs throughout our city, particularly our underserved women and minority-owned business people.

And finally, we must tackle the challenge of affordable housing – a challenge that has grown considerably in recent years, with many workers pushed out of the city and forced into long commutes that only make our traffic and parking problems more severe. To begin to remedy this, we will work through the Housing

Authority and with the private sector to incentivize the creation of more workforce and affordable housing where it's needed most here in the city.

Related to this, we have also recently seen the emergence of so-called "tent cities" in certain areas of the Peninsula – a problem that we are already working with county government, SCDOT, the Homeless Coalition and others to bring to a humane but clear and final end in the near future.

The fourth focus of our quality of life plan is making city government itself better and more responsive to our citizens.

To do this, we will begin with a performance review of city processes, which will help us understand what's working – and where we need improvement. With this information in hand, we will then be able to make our city more efficient for taxpayers, more effective for citizens and more rewarding for our workforce.

Alongside this review, we will also soon roll out a series of initiatives aimed at increasing transparency, improving collaboration with our neighborhoods and citizens, and enhancing cooperation between and among our regional partners.

And we are already at work on a far-reaching digital initiative that will help us improve and expand basic city services with technology.

As part of this project, we will be expanding our online offerings for business -where now, for the first time ever, business licenses can be acquired through our
city's website, and soon, the entire building permit process will be available in a
single, seamless online system.

The fifth and final focus of our plan is squarely aimed at the place where quality of life issues are experienced most powerfully -- in the areas and neighborhoods our residents call home.

First, West Ashley. As many others have noted in recent days, no part of our city is more ready for a renaissance than West Ashley. And I am happy to be able to report to you tonight that our city is already making real progress on that goal.

This year, for the first time, revenues from our city's tourism industry are going to enhance and beautify West Ashley, with two future parks being paid for in part with the accommodations tax, and a Tax Increment Finance District in the

planning stages to finance major streetscape and revitalization projects, such as those our city has performed so successfully on Upper King Street and elsewhere on the Peninsula.

But these initiatives are just a start. Later this year, we will break ground on the West Ashley Senior Center -- and by the time it's complete, those seniors and other area residents will be able to purchase and enjoy fresh, high quality produce at a new city-sponsored West Ashley Farmers Market. And in the years ahead, as we continue to make the necessary investments in beautification and revitalization, West Ashley will take its place as a crown jewel in the Charleston cityscape -- and a centerpiece of our region's future cultural and economic development.

Next up is the Peninsula, which as I mentioned earlier, will benefit from the Lowline project now being planned. It will also be well served by the recent splitting of the Board of Architectural Review into two separate bodies, as well as the implementation this year of the city's new Tourism Management Plan -- a sensible set of rules that establish reasonable limits on new events, better regulation of cruise ships, a more rational approach to parking and more. In

addition to these initiatives, we plan to take several steps this year to further improve quality of life on the Peninsula -- including reform of antiquated zoning laws that have recently been utilized to allow additional density in areas where it may not be appropriate.

Like West Ashley and the Peninsula, James, Johns and Daniel Islands all have remarkable strengths — and a highly specific set of quality of life concerns. That's why our plan has been specifically tailored to address their needs, as well. For James Island, that means better relationships and coordination between neighboring governments, consolidation of services where it might save our citizens tax dollars, and the furtherance of agreements that guarantee the fastest possible response times in emergency situations when life and property are at risk. For Johns Island, it includes strict observance of the Urban Growth Boundary to preserve the area's character, and efforts to improve and expand recreational opportunities. And for Daniel Island, it will involve street improvements, continued implementation of one-side parking — and the resolution of long-standing commitments from the original Daniel Island Development Agreement.

My fellow Charlestonians, the plan I've laid out here tonight is not a small set of proposals designed to nibble away at the edges of the quality of life challenges facing our city. Rather, it is a practical, comprehensive strategy to make our already great city even greater by putting our neighborhoods and citizens quality of life first. And, at the same time, it is entirely in keeping with the Charleston spirit of unity and common purpose that we've shown the world over the past year.

Working together, we can make our future even brighter than our past – and our present. And, being Charlestonians, I have no doubt that we will.

Good night, God bless you all, and God Bless the great city of Charleston, SC.